

Chapter Two

Community Education

Direct Public Relations
Indirect Public Relations



City of Carlsbad
Community Forest Management Plan

Chapter 2 – Community Education

“Public understanding of the urban and community forest... is critical for maintaining a viable program.”



A significant component of Carlsbad's Community Forest is the tree population that is not maintained by the City. These trees exist on private, residential, and commercial property. In fact, these privately managed trees comprise the majority of most community forests. Despite the fact that the majority of these trees are not maintained by a public agency, they are of concern because they can have a significant impact on public trees and the collective community forest. Community outreach is critical to viable urban forest management for both public and private trees (International Society of Arboriculture 2001).

The goal of urban forest management community outreach is to create healthy, safe, and valuable community trees through an overall increase in tree care knowledge. This can be accomplished by assisting Carlsbad residents, community associations, and other private entities in making decisions that will effectively manage the trees comprising the community forest according to recognized arboricultural and urban forestry standards.

The goal of providing tree care public education, is to win public understanding and support. Public understanding of the urban and community forest, how it is managed, the importance of the right tree for the right planting space, removal and replacement, and proper care and maintenance is critical for maintaining a viable program. It is well-known that community forest health and long-term sustainability is best achieved when a solid base of support is available from the public **and** city officials (Miller 1988).

Several effective methods are available for raising the awareness of Carlsbad's citizens in terms of tree care. Many citizens are unaware that there are resources for information regarding proper tree selection, planting, and maintenance. Several studies suggest there is generally a perception among citizens of most cities that trees are high maintenance, costly, and must be heavily pruned to avoid problems and frequent pruning (Miller 1988). Further, many of the problems that residents find their trees causing and try to solve through pruning are actually problems that arise from improper planting, tree selection, or maintenance.

The next section introduces the varying types of public education currently employed by, or available to the City.

Direct public relations

Direct public relations are practiced when any city employee discusses tree care or tree issues with members of the public. All employees who have contact with the public should be

trained to answer questions properly. One example of positive public relations and education currently employed by Carlsbad tree crews is the practice of carrying International Society of Arboriculture handouts describing common tree issues and proper cultural practices that can easily be distributed without affecting crew productivity.



The following tree related subjects are all issues that should be well understood by City employees that interface with the public:

- Tree maintenance
- Tree Pruning
- Tree Planting
- Recommended tree species
- Pest management

City personnel at the management level, or their representative, should have contact with local organizations such as:

- Neighborhood groups
- Service clubs
- Garden/nature clubs
- Schools

One example of a direct public relations program that garners public involvement is a tree steward program. Programs like this encourage training citizens to plant and care for trees. Once a volunteer reaches an obtainable but challenging milestone, they are granted tree steward status. These programs provide opportunities for people to serve as volunteers in the community while providing the City with additional human resources for urban forest management.

Indirect public relations

Indirect public relations are no less important than direct public relations and can often reach a larger audience. Fostering support and citizen education regarding the Community Forest and its management require both direct and indirect public relations. The City can provide any or all of the following indirect public relations options:

Public Media

- News releases
- News tips
- Featured stories
- Columns
- Talk shows
- Public service announcements
- Exhibits – fairs, conferences, expositions, garden



shows, Arbor Day, arboretums, elementary schools, and/or tree planting.

One example of a program that provides immediate positive public relations is the Tree City USA program. The City of Carlsbad meets many of the requirements for Tree City USA status and will become a Tree City USA soon. Cities that meet defined goals are proclaimed Tree Cities by the National Arbor Day Foundation. The goals are designed to help structure an urban forestry program that is based on accepted practices. To achieve this Tree City USA status, a City must have a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a minimum two dollars per capita for a community forestry program annual budget, and observance of Arbor Day by proclamation. The City of Carlsbad meets all of these requirements. Carlsbad will soon be recognized for its outstanding urban and community forestry program and the healthy, beneficial forest that results. The benefits associated with the Tree City USA status include that it provides a framework for community forest standards, it elevates the public image of the City and of citizen pride, provides access to urban forestry related financial assistance that may not have been available, and provides opportunities for good direct public relations.



Public signs or posters in:

- schools
- Public buildings
- Parks
- Transit centers

Literature

- Articles with urban forestry and arboriculture topics in local newsletters
- Flyers
- Handouts
- Fact sheets in utility bills – local trash bills providing best distribution

Heritage tree program*

- Brochures and informational signs
- Significant attributes
- Historical events
- Age information
- Prominence

**The Heritage Tree Program for the City of Carlsbad is summarized in Chapter 7.*

Increasing the public's understanding of trees and tree care can take many forms. As noted, important information regarding the City's community forest can be disseminated to the City's residents in many ways. Each method of tree education and awareness presented has advantages and disadvantages. The most important point is not the method of knowledge distribution but knowledge distribution itself. Information circulation places trees and their care in front of the public and allows them to learn, understand, and relate to the City's forest management program. However public tree and community forest knowledge is raised, whether through Tree City USA celebrations, presentations, press releases, handouts, or conversations, raising the tree awareness of Carlsbad's citizens will have significant positive affects on the community forest at large.

Appendix A includes several examples of information brochures, some of which are available through the International Society of Arboriculture and other organizations. The City may elect to modify or create their own education material based loosely on the examples provided.

The Value of Trees to a Community – Educational Trivia

The following excerpts appear on the National Arbor Day Foundation website at www.arborday.org/trees/nineThings.html. They are valuable facts that help citizens understand the many benefits of trees.

“The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room size air conditions operating 20 hours a day.” –U.S. Department of Agriculture

“Trees can boost the market value of your home by an average of 6 or 7 percent.” –Dr. Lowell Ponte

“Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20 percent.” –Management Information Services/ICMA

“One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people.” –U.S. Department of Agriculture

“There are about 60- to 200- million spaces along our city streets where trees could be planted. This translates to the potential to absorb 33 million more tons of CO₂ every year, and saving \$4 billion in energy costs.” –National Wildlife Federation

“Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent and can save 20 – 50 percent in energy used for heating.” –USDA Forest Service

“Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent.” –The National Arbor Day Foundation

“Shade from trees could save up to \$175 per year (per structure) in air conditioning costs.” –Dr. Lowell Ponte

“Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property’s value” –USDA Forest Service

“The planting of trees means improved water quality, resulting in less runoff and erosion. This allows more recharging of the ground water supply. Wooded areas help prevent the transport of sediment and chemicals into streams.” –USDA Forest Service

“In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension.” –Dr. Roger S. Ulrich, Texas A&M University

“Nationally, the 60 million street trees have an average value of \$525 per tree.” – Management Information Services